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Letter dated 4 April 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I refer to operative paragraph 13 of Security Council resolution 2333 (2016), in which the Council requested me to prepare, within 90 days from the adoption of the resolution, a report that sets out a well-developed peacebuilding plan to direct the role of the United Nations system and other relevant partners in supporting the transition of Liberia. The Council also emphasized, in this regard, the important convening role of the Peacebuilding Commission in the process of developing the plan.

I am pleased to share with you herewith the above-mentioned plan, as well as a transmittal letter dated 20 March 2017 from Marjon Vashti Kamara, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia, and Farid Zarif, my Special Representative for Liberia and Head of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) (see annex).

The plan was developed through an intensive consultative process led by UNMIL, in close coordination with the Government of Liberia and international partners, as well as Liberian political parties and civil society organizations. Its broad national ownership will ensure the continued commitment of the stakeholders to the plan following the assumption of authority by a new Government subsequent to the October 2017 general elections.

The plan is fully aligned with the peacebuilding priorities of Liberia, which are provided in an annex to the plan, as reflected in the Agenda for Transformation, as well as the statement of mutual commitments on peacebuilding in Liberia, concluded on 19 April 2016 by the Government of Liberia and the Peacebuilding Commission, and other similar frameworks.

The plan provides a timetable for the transition of Liberia. Phase I runs until March 2018 and specifies concrete steps to be taken to ensure successful completion of the mandate of the Mission by that date. During phase II, which begins in April 2018, longer-term peacebuilding priorities will be integrated into development frameworks to support national efforts to mitigate and prevent conflict. The plan was informed by the initial findings of the ongoing capacity-mapping exercise for the United Nations country team, which indicate that the departure of UNMIL will result in a reduced United Nations technical capacity to support peacebuilding and conflict prevention. In this regard, I encourage the Security Council to consider proposals in the peacebuilding plan to help sustain the peace agenda in Liberia.

Please recycle

The plan was facilitated through tripartite cooperation between the United Nations, the World Bank and the European Union, as well as thorough consultations with the Peacebuilding Commission.

It is important to underline that the plan contains specific provisions related to the support to be provided by the Economic Community of West African States, as well as the World Bank. We also look forward to active engagement by other regional and subregional organizations, including the African Union.

The plan constitutes another important step in the transition of Liberia, and I congratulate the Government of Liberia, UNMIL and other partners for their impressive efforts. The plan provides for a robust and specific framework of cooperation between the United Nations and the wider international community in support of the Government of Liberia and other national stakeholders. If successfully implemented, this plan could serve as a model in other similar post-conflict situations.

I would be grateful if you could bring this letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

Annex

Letter dated 20 March 2017 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia and Head of the United Nations Mission in Liberia addressed to the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations

Please find attached the final draft of the peacebuilding plan for Liberia, which was developed pursuant to Security Council resolution 2333 (2016). The plan has been fully endorsed by the Government of Liberia and was developed in close consultation with national stakeholders and international partners.

The plan is the result of an extensive consultative process led by the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the Liberia Peacebuilding Office. A core component of the consultative process was the establishment of the Reference Group, which was comprised of senior representatives of Government ministries, agencies and commissions, the National Civil Society Council of Liberia, UNMIL, the United Nations country team and the donor community. The Reference Group guided the formulation of the peacebuilding priority areas identified in the plan, building upon the Agenda for Transformation, the statement of mutual commitments on peacebuilding in Liberia and other peace consolidation frameworks. Consultations with bilateral and multilateral actors further defined areas of ongoing assistance to national peacebuilding priorities, which were also factored into the plan. Finally, all registered political parties and civil society groups were consulted extensively to ensure collective and ongoing commitment to the plan. As such, we anticipate that the new administration, which takes office in January 2018, will support the continued implementation of the plan.

The drafting process was assisted by the deployment to Monrovia in February of a Headquarters team comprised of representatives of the United Nations, the World Bank and the European Union. This team helped clarify issues and develop the plan's framework and articulation.

We believe that this plan will help establish a robust framework of collaboration between the Government and national stakeholders, on the one hand, and the United Nations and the wider international community, on the other, to sustain peace in Liberia. We hope that it will be an example for other post-conflict societies around the world.

(*Signed*) Marjon V. **Kamara**
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Republic of Liberia

(*Signed*) Farid **Zarif**
Under-Secretary-General
Head of UNMIL

Sustaining peace and securing development: Liberia peacebuilding plan

Final draft

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 2333 (2016), the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to prepare, within 90 days of the adoption of the resolution, a report that sets out a well-developed peacebuilding plan to direct the role of the United Nations system and other relevant partners, including multilateral and bilateral actors, in supporting the transition of Liberia. In response to the request by the Council, the present peacebuilding plan has been developed jointly by the United Nations system in Liberia and the Government of Liberia in collaboration with national and international stakeholders. Success in sustaining peace depends on national stakeholders building a common vision of society, in which peacebuilding is a shared responsibility of all Liberians, supported by the international community.

2. The plan builds on the long-standing engagement by the international community to support the post-war recovery of Liberia and ongoing donor assistance programmes in the country. It identifies key actions that must be taken before 30 March 2018, when the substantive mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) ends, and outlines the level of political engagement that will be required thereafter to ensure the sustainability of peace. The plan provides a framework for the continued role of the United Nations country team during and especially after the transition process.

3. In order to be successful, the peacebuilding plan will require improved integration and coherence of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in the design and delivery of peacebuilding outcomes. In this context, United Nations system approaches to delivering as one will help to overcome bureaucratic and administrative inefficiencies and promote partnership arrangements that fully align projects supported by the United Nations and programmes and investments made by international donors with the priorities of the Government of Liberia. This collective endeavour will extend to ensuring ongoing analysis and assessment of the transition process in partnership with the World Bank Group, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and other international partners.

II. Objective

4. Peacebuilding in Liberia must maintain the momentum of the last 14 years, even as the country undergoes two transitions: the election of a new Government in October 2017 and the end of the UNMIL mandate on 30 March 2018. The present plan provides a well-developed framework for sustaining peace, formulated in accordance with Security Council resolution 2333 (2016), and directs the role of the United Nations system and other relevant partners in supporting the transition of Liberia during the drawdown of UNMIL and beyond, as stipulated in the resolution.

5. The peacebuilding plan takes inspiration from Security Council resolution 2282 (2016), in which the Council stresses the importance of promoting "an integrated, strategic and coherent approach to peacebuilding, noting that security, development and human rights are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing". The plan consolidates commitments across development, security and human rights operations, and defines priority areas for mutual engagement in order to prevent relapse into conflict, continue reform efforts, promote reconciliation, strengthen the security environment and lay the foundations for conflict-sensitive development.

6. Without prejudice to the primary responsibility of the Government of Liberia for the welfare of its population, the plan is an expression of the partnership between the Government, the United Nations system, bilateral and multilateral actors and all Liberian political and civil society stakeholders. In this context, it recognizes the Peacebuilding Commission as an intergovernmental advisory body with the function of bringing sustained international attention to sustaining peace and providing political accompaniment and advocacy to countries affected by conflict, with their consent (see Security Council resolution 2282 (2016), para. 4). The Government led the development of the plan, which is in line with its efforts to design and implement solutions to peacebuilding challenges. In this regard, the peacebuilding plan establishes a basis for harmonizing peacebuilding operations with long-term national plans and strategies, including through the Agenda for Transformation.

III. Context

7. The country's post-war recovery efforts are characterized by several major achievements, including the transfer of security responsibilities from UNMIL to the Government on 30 June 2016 and the conduct of peaceful presidential elections in 2005 and 2011 and legislative elections in 2011 and 2014. These successes have been accompanied by important national policy initiatives such as Liberia Rising: Vision 2030; the Agenda for Transformation (2012-2017); the Strategic Road Map for National Healing, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation (2013-2030); and the start of a constitutional review process and draft legislation related to the justice and security sectors, land rights and administration, local governance, decentralization and civil service reform.

8. Liberia also enjoys a much-improved subregional situation and does not currently face any threats from neighbouring countries. With peace and stability in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone, it is likely that the regional situation will continue to be propitious for the continuation of peace in Liberia. As UNMIL continues to phase out, Liberia is taking advantage of this favourable regional situation to strengthen its place within the subregional organizations, including the Mano River Union and ECOWAS, as well as the African Union. In this connection, Liberia is currently successfully carrying out the functions of the Chair of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS. Other areas of subregional collaboration could involve further enhancement of the cross-border strategy for security of the Mano River Union, while Liberia could look to ECOWAS to provide security guarantees should the situation so require, as recently demonstrated by decisive ECOWAS action in the Gambia.

9. Notwithstanding the many gains made in maintaining national peace and security in Liberia, issues identified as root causes of the country's 14-year civil war remain unaddressed. Public institutional reforms are urgently required, with an emphasis on the effective implementation of the national legislative agenda. In addition, recent assessments show that land disputes, corruption, boundary disputes and concession-related tensions continue to be the main triggers of violence. The lives of many women are particularly insecure owing to societal inequality and sexual and gender-based violence, further weakening social cohesion in communities. Low commodity prices for primary exports and the outbreak of the Ebola virus disease have limited economic growth, undermining high expectations for a speedy post-war recovery and the delivery of peace dividends.

10. These challenges are compounded by limited capacities in the security and rule of law sectors, slow progress in national reconciliation and limited progress in implementing critical government reforms. Relations between the executive branch of the Government and society have improved, but remain strained, owing to the absence of meaningful national reconciliation and a low level of public confidence in justice and security institutions, whose presence remains limited outside of Monrovia. Sustaining peace in Liberia requires long-term investment in national institutions that are inclusive, accountable and responsive, with a Government that is committed to providing opportunities and services to all Liberians.

IV. Guiding principles

11. The peacebuilding plan is guided by the following principles:

(a) **Inclusive national ownership**. The peacebuilding plan and its implementation modalities are rooted in extensive consultation with the Government of Liberia, political parties and civil society;[1]

(b) **Strategic peacebuilding priorities**. The peacebuilding plan establishes priorities in a number of critical transition areas, in particular the rule of law, human rights and the security sector, while laying the foundations for a longer-term approach;

(c) **Establishment of a consensus-based approach to conflict sensitivity**. The peacebuilding plan defines mutually agreed criteria for the prioritization and selection of commitments by the Government of Liberia and its international partners based on human rights principles;

(d) **Consolidation and reaffirmation of commitments**. The plan does not replace existing strategies and plans, but rather consolidates and reaffirms mutual commitments identified by the Government of Liberia and international partners over the past years;

[1] In February 2017, two consultations were held with representatives of Liberian political parties and one consultation was held with civil society leaders in Monrovia. Civil society was formally represented in the Reference Group formed to guide the process to draft the peacebuilding plan, which also included representatives of the Government of Liberia, the international community, the World Bank and the United Nations system.

(e) **Ensuring the transparent, timely and predictable use of aid**. The plan rests on the commitment of the Government of Liberia and donors to ensure the transparent, timely and predictable use of aid to support these priorities through information-sharing and regular and frank policy dialogue;

(f) **Strategic communications**. UNMIL and the Government of Liberia will employ strategic communications as a vehicle for increasing public awareness and managing expectations with respect to the transition process. This effort should ensure that Liberians understand the commitments, roles and responsibilities of the Government, the United Nations system and international partners in implementing the peacebuilding plan. The mode of communication should be appropriate and, where necessary, utilize Liberian English or local languages.

V. Structure of the plan

12. The peacebuilding plan creates a timetable for the transition of Liberia, defined by the election process in October 2017, the assumption of office by a new Government in January 2018 and the closure of UNMIL in March 2018.

13. The peacebuilding plan establishes an agreed road map for immediate action to be undertaken as part of a successful transition, while establishing directional guidance for achievement of a peaceful, just and inclusive society based on the rule of law and respect for human rights and in line with the broader goal of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 through a diversified and decentralized economic model based on the local market, sustainable agriculture, agro-industry and small and medium-sized enterprises.

14. The plan will have two phases:

(a) Phase I, which will run from April 2017 to March 2018, includes the activities required during the next 12 months to ensure a successful transition. It entails the actions required of the United Nations system in support of the commitment by the Government of Liberia to develop the durable national capacities critical for sustaining peace before the departure of UNMIL;

(b) Phase II will commence in April 2018 and will last for a period to be determined by the new Government, but in principle will not extend beyond 2020, which is the year that the envisioned midterm review of the Agenda for Transformation II is to take place.[2] During this phase, longer-term peacebuilding priorities will be integrated into the development frameworks necessary to ensure ongoing support to national efforts to mitigate, prevent and manage risks of conflict. In support of this work, collaborative efforts will be undertaken to ensure the establishment of effective early warning capacities, as well as to put in place a baseline of agreed risk and resilience analysis in support of conflict-sensitive development planning.

[2] Current planning for the Agenda for Transformation II is under way, with final approval to be completed by the new Government in 2018 and a midterm review scheduled for 2020. The current World Bank country partnership framework, 2018-2022, is also scheduled for a midterm review in 2020.

15. In the transition between the two phases, particular attention will be paid to the political and operational transition to be undertaken by both the Government of Liberia and the United Nations system during the immediate post-electoral period. During this time, dedicated assistance and engagement will be undertaken to ensure that the United Nations system and partners are responsive to the priorities set by the new Government.

16. Phase I actions have been agreed by the Government of Liberia, the United Nations system and other participants involved in the formulation of the peacebuilding plan. Indicative priorities for phase II have been agreed, with a review of the priorities and United Nations system support, led jointly by the newly elected Government, the United Nations and international partners, to begin before the departure of UNMIL.

17. The two phases of the plan will help to govern the sequence of United Nations interventions and the milestones required to support the Government of Liberia in addressing the country's peacebuilding needs. The sequencing of actions has been determined through the application of the following criteria:

- Will the activity have an immediate and visible impact on sustaining peaceful transition and/or addressing collectively identified risk and resilience factors?
- Will the activity directly target the poorest and most vulnerable population groups and households and/or the most disenfranchised parts of the country?
- Can the activity be implemented in the planned time frame given existing implementation capacities (national and international) and available resources?
- Does the activity establish essential systems and/or enable the foundational reforms required to build national capacity?

VI. United Nations plan to support national peacebuilding priorities and the process of transition through March 2018

18. During phase I of the peacebuilding plan, the United Nations system will support the Government of Liberia in establishing the necessary conditions for a free and fair electoral process and a smooth democratic transition following the presidential elections in October 2017. Without prejudice to the range of ongoing programmes being supported by the United Nations system, phase I of the peacebuilding plan outlines critical actions required for a peaceful election process, national reconciliation, delivery of the Government's legislative programme and the deconcentration of public services. The United Nations system will build on the existing partnership with the Government of Liberia and implement peacebuilding priorities through the lens of the Agenda for Transformation, the statement of mutual commitments on peacebuilding in Liberia and other pertinent policy frameworks.

19. Preventing conflict will be central to the United Nations system's support to two parallel processes of transition. During the first transition process, the United Nations will focus on facilitating a peaceful and orderly transfer of political and administrative power from the current Government to a new administration, which will take office in January 2018. In the second transition process, the focus will be

on the departure of UNMIL and the engagement of the remaining United Nations entities with the new Government, whereby the United Nations country team will assume conflict prevention responsibilities through projects, programmes and advocacy. In the second transition process, the handover of UNMIL assets, both physical and intellectual, to the country team will be managed.

A. Peace consolidation priorities

Promoting inclusive and peaceful elections in 2017

20. The presidential and legislative elections to be held in October 2017 present an opportunity for Liberians to demonstrate their commitment to democracy and the consolidation of peace. Liberia is Africa's oldest republic, yet the 2017 elections will mark the first time in the country's history that a peaceful handover of political and administrative power from one democratically elected administration to another will take place in a process of competitive multiparty elections. It is inevitable that global attention will be drawn to this historic moment, and the conduct of the elections will testify to the political maturity of Liberians and the effectiveness of national and international efforts at post-conflict nation building.

21. The conduct of free, fair and transparent elections in 2017 depends largely on the stewardship role of the National Elections Commission, which must carry out its duties in an impartial, competent, and transparent manner. The Commission should also ensure that political parties and candidates running for office comply with the electoral rules and regulations. This can be achieved through the conclusion of a compact among political parties that commits them to carrying out an inclusive, peaceful elections process and supporting a well-ordered political transition. The credibility of the election results will depend on the level of participation by citizens and inclusivity, ensuring that youth, women and marginalized groups are fully involved in the national debate, and will require a robust voter education programme. All political aspirants and their respective political parties should publicly repudiate and condemn the heinous practice of ritual killings, which has marred earlier pre-election periods. The outgoing Government bears the responsibility for maintaining peace and security in connection with election activities and ensuring that the police, courts and prisons are prepared and adequately resourced to respond to law enforcement and legal challenges related to the elections.

22. In this context, the United Nations system will support the electoral process by concentrating efforts in the following areas:

(a) Forming a high-level crisis management forum designed to mitigate, prevent and manage potential election violence, made up of senior representatives of the Government, the United Nations system, ECOWAS and other bilateral and multilateral actors;

(b) Engaging the Government of Liberia and national stakeholders through the good offices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to ensure a free, fair, peaceful and transparent electoral process;

(c) Supporting the efforts of the Government of Liberia to ensure an inclusive electoral process in 2017, with special attention to the observance of

human rights norms and standards, the full participation of women and youth in the planning and execution of the elections and the prevention of electoral violence;

(d) Providing technical, operational and financial support to the National Elections Commission through the elections programme supported the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Peace, security and the rule of law

23. While significant progress has been made in strengthening the rule of law in Liberia since conflict ended in 2003, real challenges remain in terms of access to justice, the effective and efficient administration of justice and ensuring equality before the law and accountability with respect to the law. Factors to be addressed include an outdated legal framework, poor oversight, weak administrative procedures and limited human and institutional capacity. The result is excessive delays, prolonged pre-trial detention, mistrials and limited progress in harmonizing the statutory and customary justice systems. Further developing the justice sector and improving public confidence in the rule of law is critical to sustaining peace and stability in Liberia. The Government recognizes these challenges and has expressed its commitment to taking forward, as a priority for its final year in office, nationally validated recommendations to address systemic weaknesses in the criminal justice system. Efforts to harmonize the statutory and customary justice systems will continue, although this will be a process stretching beyond phase I of the peacebuilding plan. Furthermore, it is recognized that effective election dispute resolution will be a key component in a smooth electoral process.

24. Significant progress has also been made in professionalizing the security sector in Liberia. The successful assumption of security responsibilities, in accordance with the deadline set by the Security Council, was a notable achievement. The priority for the sector in phase I will be to ensure effective security for the free, fair, transparent and safe conduct of the 2017 elections, in line with international human rights standards, and the transition to a new Government. Key components of elections security will include efforts to build trust with communities through an increased emphasis on community policing, efforts to increase operational effectiveness and countrywide deployments, and efforts to ensure that county security councils are operating effectively. A further priority will be implementation of the sector's legal and policy framework, including the operationalization of internal management and civilian oversight bodies. The strengthening of border management remains a further key component of security and stability. The resourcing of the security sector is an ever-present challenge, and a financial review will be undertaken to inform future budgetary allocations.

25. Liberians agree that national reconciliation is the vehicle for sustained conflict transformation and long-term stability. However, 14 years after the signing of the 2003 Comprehensive Peace Agreement there is limited progress towards addressing the root causes of Liberia's civil war. Many of the key recommendations in the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, issued in December 2009,[3] remain unrealized. Furthermore, the passage of key bills is critical to addressing the root causes of the fragmented State-society relations, but the slow pace of

[3] Available from http://trcofliberia.org/reports/final-report.

legislative reform hinders reconciliation. The peacebuilding plan seeks to re-energize national reconciliation in the final year of the current Government's tenure and establish the parameters for long-term national healing.

26. In line with Security Council resolutions 2171 (2014) and 2282 (2016), in which the Council recognized the primary responsibility of the Government of Liberia for sustaining peace, the United Nations will remain available to ensure early warning and conflict prevention for the purpose of sustaining peace, including through the employment of joint delivery mechanisms, such as the United Nations-World Bank Group Partnership for Fragile and Conflict-Affected Countries and Situations, the Joint Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention and the Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections. During phase I of the peacebuilding plan, the United Nations will:

(a) Develop national capacity for and understanding of the protection of civilians, with a focus on the electoral period;

(b) Advise the Liberia National Police and other law enforcement agencies on effective planning for nationwide operational effectiveness with respect to elections security;

(c) Support the implementation of community-based policing to build trust between Liberian citizens and law enforcement agencies;

(d) Support the operationalization of county security councils as effective early warning and coordination mechanisms;

(e) Facilitate bilateral cooperation with Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire on border security and stabilization, in collaboration with regional and international partners;

(f) Advise the Government of Liberia on the effective implementation of the National Security Strategy, the Police Act, the Immigration Services Act and the Firearms and Ammunition Control Act;

(g) Advise the Government of Liberia on the implementation of nationally validated recommendations for justice sector reform;

(h) Support the Government of Liberia, in collaboration with the World Bank, in a public expenditure review of the security sector;

(i) Engage national stakeholders, including political parties, civil society and the National Elections Commission, in fostering peace and reconciliation beyond the elections;

(j) Provide advice to the Government on the revision of the Strategic Road Map for National Healing, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation;

(k) Support a national conference on reconciliation and assist in the roll-out of county reconciliation dialogues.

Economic transformation

27. There is broad consensus[4] that poverty and social and economic inequality were among the root causes of conflict in Liberia. The Government of Liberia, as a member of the Group of Seven Plus, recognizes that the country is among the world's most fragile and conflict-affected States. The legacy of war, its dependence on highly volatile primary commodities in the extractive sector and its exposure to a number of exogenous climate, conflict and disaster risks impose particular challenges for Liberia in its efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and Agenda 2063 of the African Union.[5] Currently, the Government of Liberia is committed to costing a revised Agenda for Transformation, which will provide a road map for domesticating the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063.

28. The incremental progress in human development measures since 2003 has not been sufficient to reverse poverty, with Liberia's rate of development remaining below the average for countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The country's economy has stagnated in the period from 2014 to 2016, resulting in a decline in GDP per capita by an average of 2 per cent per annum. This is largely a result of the continued slump in global commodity prices and a negligible recovery in private capital inflows in the post-Ebola era. The leading iron ore concession companies, which had been the key drivers of growth in recent years, have either scaled back their operations or closed down, resulting in a decline in exports, job losses and a decline in government revenue.

29. In March 2017, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reduced the 2016 economic growth estimate for Liberia to -1.2 per cent from its October 2016 estimate of -0.5 per cent. IMF anticipates that the Government of Liberia will face a significant budget shortfall, despite donor budget support of nearly $75 million for the financial year 2016/17.[6] While IMF projects economic growth of 2.5 to 3 per cent for the financial year 2017/18, this is still below the pre-Ebola growth rate of 7 per cent. Consequently, the fiscal out-turn for 2016/17 is estimated at $520 million, representing a 6 per cent decline compared with the out-turn for the fiscal year 2014/15.[7] Continuing weak revenues and declining donor resources in the 2017/18 fiscal year could force the Government to reduce spending by an additional 15 to 20 per cent. These factors have significant implications for domestic revenue mobilization, inflation and exchange rate stability during phase I of the peacebuilding plan and the transition to a new administration, with the likely prospect that the Government will lack resources to meet its commitments.

30. From this perspective, economic reform and development are critical for financing peacebuilding and remain long-term objectives of the plan. In phase I, the United Nations will help the Government to accelerate critical structural reforms and pro-poor policies aimed at private sector-led and shared economic growth.

[4] See the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (available from http://trcofliberia.org/reports/final-report) and the Agenda for Transformation (available from http://www.lr.undp.org/content/liberia/en/home/ourwork/library/liberia-agenda-for-transformation.html).

[5] See au.int/en2/agenda2063.

[6] Findings of the International Monetary Fund mission to Liberia, March 2017.

[7] Figures from the World Bank mission to Liberia, March 2017.

During this period, the United Nations system will support the establishment of a macroeconomic Research and Policy Unit in the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, including adequate technical and financial resources, and strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning to effectively track, align and harmonize aid coordination.

Governance and public institutions

31. Governance reform is central to building peace and promoting reconciliation in Liberia. The inadequacies and shortcomings of the governance framework have historically served as a source of conflict and contributed to enduring divisions in society. The centralization of political, social and economic power in Monrovia is entrenched in the Liberian Constitution (1847 and 1986), and the failure of this arrangement to provide for self-governance and service delivery institutions at the local level contributed to igniting the political, social and ethnic tensions that ultimately led to social unrest, political violence and civil war.

32. Progress in implementing the governance reform agenda has been slow. The Local Government Bill and the Land Rights Bill are still pending before the Legislature, and the Land Authority requires budgetary appropriations to become operational. The perception among many Liberians is that despite robust, inclusive and participatory dialogues, governance reform has been frustrated by a lack of political will. In this regard, the role of civil society needs to be strengthened to ensure that it can become an effective agent for social change and ensure the accountability of government policies.

33. United Nations system support to governance and public institutions remains crucial for structural reform and consolidating the peacebuilding achievements of past years. The United Nations role will be to help national stakeholders to deliver on the critical legislative package, accelerate the deconcentration of public services, help establish an effective land governance and administration system and help public institutions to restore the State's relationship of trust with its citizens.

34. During phase I of the peacebuilding plan, the United Nations will focus on the following areas:

(a) Advocating and supporting the passage of the Land Rights Bill and the Local Governance Bill and helping the Government to establish the regulatory framework to implement the Land Authority Act;

(b) Supporting the decentralization efforts of the Government and strengthening local government capacities to manage equitable and inclusive service delivery in all 15 counties;

(c) Advocating for the amendment of the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission Act of 2008;

(d) Supporting inclusive governance and accountability for results by enabling civil society (local non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations) to strengthen their watchdog and monitoring role.

Cross-cutting issues

35. The Government of Liberia is committed to ensuring that peacebuilding priorities are based on human rights principles, and is focused on strengthening the national protection system. Major human rights concerns include the high levels of sexual and gender-based violence, a lack of human rights protection in judicial proceedings and conflict between certain traditional practices and human rights norms. Key priorities in this regard include the implementation of the National Human Rights Action Plan; reinforcing and sustaining the engagement of Liberia with treaty bodies, special procedures of the Human Rights Council and the universal periodic review; domesticating international instruments into national law; and building the capacity of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights. The Government of Liberia will also seek to support the establishment of an office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Liberia to provide essential ongoing technical support to national human rights institutions and ensure sustainable relationships with regional and international human rights bodies.

36. With 79 per cent of its population under the age of 36,[8] the capturing of opportunities offered by a youthful population remains fundamental to national development and peacebuilding in Liberia. Today, high youth unemployment, limited access to quality education and the dearth of sustainable livelihood opportunities leave thousands of young people excluded from national life. Reform of the country's education system, so that young Liberians develop the skills to become productive citizens, must become a fundamental pillar of the sustaining peace agenda. Government leadership in youth development is currently focused on the passage and implementation of the National Youth Bill and opening regular channels of communication between young people and the authorities to encourage youth participation in promoting a peaceful electoral period.

37. Broad and equal participation of women and men across political and socioeconomic spheres remains critical to the consolidation of peace. Liberia is party to several international instruments on gender and peacebuilding, and the Government has adopted a national gender policy and a national action plan for implementing Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). Ensuring that women participate fully in the 2017 election process as candidates, voters and administrators is critical to advancing gender parity and helping women to have an equal voice in political decision-making and public policy formulation. The Government's commitment to apply gender-sensitive budgeting in the preparation of the 2017/18 budgets of ministries, agencies and commissions is a positive step in this direction.

38. Liberia is vulnerable to the impact of climate variability and change, which further exacerbate the country's socioeconomic development challenges. The fragility of ecosystems is exacerbated by human activity centred on the exploitation and competition for natural resources, which contributes to ongoing social tension and conflict. Accelerated economic recovery through the extraction of commodities carries inherent risks related to social cohesion, human rights and environmental

[8] Liberia, Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, National AIDS Control Programme and ICF International, *Liberia Demographic and Health Survey 2013* (Monrovia, 2014).

sustainability. Conflicts between foreign companies and local communities in concession areas underscore the fragile nature of peace consolidation in circumstances in which the commercial interest in exploiting ecosystem assets and human security priorities intersect.

39. United Nations support to human rights, youth development, gender equality and environmental sustainability is integral to the human security approach of the peacebuilding plan. The approach allows the United Nations system to promote a constructive relationship between duty bearers and rights holders[9] during the transition process through ongoing efforts by national and international stakeholders to sustain peace. In this context, the United Nations will prioritize its support in the following areas:

(a) Supporting human rights promotion, protection and monitoring activities in Liberia, with special attention to violations and abuses committed against children and women, by advising on and supporting the implementation and monitoring of the National Human Rights Action Plan and recommendations of the universal periodic review;

(b) Strengthening the capacity of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights to implement its mandate;

(c) Advocating and supporting the passage of the Affirmative Action Bill for Equitable Participation and Representation;

(d) Advocating and supporting the passage of the Domestic Violence Bill;

(e) Supporting efforts by the Government of Liberia to combat sexual and gender-based violence, including combating impunity for perpetrators of such crimes;

(f) Supporting the establishment of an office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Liberia by 1 April 2018;

(g) Supporting the Government's review of the National Youth Policy, promoting the passage of the National Youth Bill and helping to implement youth-related aspects of the Strategic Road Map for National Healing, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation;

(h) Supporting increased youth engagement and participation in governance and development processes at all levels in order to strengthen the rule of law, promote peacebuilding and prevent conflicts and violence, with special focus on ensuring that the 2017 elections are peaceful and successful;

(i) Developing and conducting a comprehensive assessment of the situation of youth in Liberia to inform joint youth policies and development interventions;

(j) Supporting vocational/technical training linked to the development of subject matter expertise and the enhancement of entrepreneurial skills and livelihood opportunities;

[9] Duty bearers are those actors who have a particular obligation or responsibility to respect, promote and realize human rights and to abstain from human rights violations. Rights holders are individuals or social groups that have particular entitlements in relation to specific duty bearers.

(k) Fully integrating a gender perspective into transition planning and putting the gender perspective at the centre of United Nations planning and programme development for the prevention and resolution of conflicts and peacebuilding;

(l) Reaffirming its commitment to allocating a minimum of 15 per cent of all United Nations peacebuilding funds to gender equality and the empowerment of women;

(m) Supporting the development of capacities for the sustainable management and utilization of natural resources, including lowland development, and ensuring that agriculture is adaptable to climate change.

B. Support for the political and administrative transfer of power following the 2017 elections

40. The post-electoral period will test the country's resilience during the transfer of political and administrative power and the ability of governance systems to continue to provide basic services to the people of Liberia. The objective of United Nations support is to ensure the smooth transition of power, the continuity of the operations and functioning of the civil service and government ministries, departments and agencies in delivering services to the populace, including core government functions, and the resumption of the sustainable development trajectory. The United Nations system will support the transition of Liberia through political dialogue and the provision of technical advice and by engaging with the Government, political parties, civil society organizations and donors to ensure a seamless political and administrative transfer of power to the incoming President and Government. Through the good offices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the United Nations will support national stakeholders to design: (a) a transitional framework for the current Government which defines roles and responsibilities for the transition process; (b) a structured time frame for managing the transition, including timelines for vacating official offices and accommodations; (c) monitoring mechanisms to safeguard government assets through an inventory system; and (d) a handover system covering a broad range of government offices to promote good record keeping and institutional memory.

41. The United Nations leadership in Liberia will engage closely with the incoming President after the elections to support the establishment of a transition team and facilitate engagement with the outgoing President and Government. The aim of this process will be to implement the transition plan and prepare for the inauguration of the new President in January 2018 and prepare the ground for the review of the peacebuilding plan at the end of phase I.

C. Managing the withdrawal of the United Nations Mission in Liberia and the transition to the United Nations country team

42. A United Nations integrated transition plan will be developed before June 2017 to address the required changes in United Nations posture following the departure of UNMIL. The transition plan will: (a) outline specific and detailed

actions by each United Nations entity for each priority area in the peacebuilding plan; (b) describe how the role and approach (e.g., direct advisory services or institutional capacity-building) of each United Nations entity will evolve during the transition process; (c) describe the current and planned field presence in Liberia; and (d) assess the capacity gaps in the country team and provide scenarios for the transfer of UNMIL assets to United Nations agencies, funds and programmes.

43. The integrated transition plan will also assess the capacity of the United Nations in Liberia to continue a high-level good offices function following the departure of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. This element of the transition speaks to one of the key findings of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, which was that political engagement is necessary in order to sustain peace (see A/70/95-S/2015/446). In Liberia, United Nations integration will need to support substantive coordination of political advocacy and programme delivery to advance the structural reforms in laws and policy required to address the underlying causes of conflict and instability.

44. The United Nations country team capacity-mapping exercise, led by UNDP and the United Nations Laboratory for Organizational Change and Knowledge, began in October 2016 and will continue until April 2017. The outcome of the exercise will be a critical input into the integrated transition plan. The mapping process takes stock of country team capacities in the context of Security Council resolution 2333 (2016) and the overall objective of enabling the country team to fully support peace and development after the departure of UNMIL and helping national stakeholders sustain peace dividends.

45. Initial findings of the capacity-mapping exercise in March 2017 indicate that the departure of UNMIL will result in a reduction in United Nations technical capacity in areas relevant to the implementation of the peacebuilding plan. The loss of the Mission's substantive human rights expertise fully justifies the need for the establishment of a local field office of the United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights, given the current limited field presence of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in Liberia. UNMIL has a presence in only three counties,[10] and the field presence of the World Health Organization and the United Nations Population Fund is winding down as Ebola-related projects close. It is widely acknowledged that the presence of the country team in 15 counties will be essential for supporting the Government's decentralization efforts, which are key to sustaining peace, through the continued provision of basic social services (including access to justice) to citizens outside Monrovia.

46. In order to remain relevant and deliver peacebuilding and development assistance to Liberia after UNMIL leaves, the country team will need to design a new business model for development assistance that includes implementation support services to the Government of Liberia, good offices and political support. The country team will need to consider the provision of a joint operations platform to streamline administrative processes and practices in order to strengthen interoperability for more cost-effective delivery of development results. This should include the co-location of agencies, funds and programmes in a United Nations

[10] From 1 July 2017, UNMIL will have a substantive field presence in two counties — Grand Gedeh and Lofa. In addition, there will be a small communications hub in Bong County.

house in Monrovia and joint country team operations, based on the comparative advantages of the respective agencies, to fill the gap that will be created by the withdrawal of UNMIL operational and logistical support, including possible operational and business development partnership solutions for providing (or facilitating the provision of) logistics and transport services in a post-UNMIL environment and the brokering of agreements on the transfer of Mission assets (both material and human resources) to the country team.

47. The transition from a peacekeeping mission to the United Nations country team signifies a shift from predictable assessed funding to the project-based funding of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. It is anticipated this will result in a significant drop in development assistance to Liberia, from both multilateral and bilateral donors, which could have a negative impact on the peacebuilding gains in the country, particularly after the electoral period. The Peacebuilding Commission should work with the Security Council to identify a possible mechanism and time frame for sustaining predictable funding for the country team for critical peacebuilding priorities following the departure of UNMIL.

D. Communicating the process of change to the Government and people of Liberia

48. An integrated communications strategy targeting diverse audiences will be further developed by UNMIL and the country team to manage expectations in Liberian society and government circles during the transition period. Transition messages will be delivered to key stakeholders (the Government, citizens, donors and United Nations staff) using various communications outlets, including UNMIL radio broadcasts, community caravans, press conferences, town hall meetings, social media and other innovative communication avenues to ensure the greatest possible outreach. Messaging to partners and the population will focus principally on the continuity of a sustained United Nations presence in Liberia after the withdrawal of UNMIL, while describing the role of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and the nature of their collaboration with government entities and civil society.

49. UNMIL radio will play a crucial role in providing trusted and factual information to the Liberian population during the entire transition period, but especially in the run-up to and during the 2017 elections. This service will continue during the transfer of political and administrative power and during the period of the Mission's withdrawal. The United Nations system in Liberia is exploring options for the sustainable transfer of UNMIL radio to an independent entity, which may involve the country team, ECOWAS and other partners.

VII. Framework for supporting long-term peacebuilding priorities

50. Phase II of the plan frames the longer-term goals for peacebuilding in Liberia. It defines the United Nations strategic direction, based on the critical requirements of the immediate post electoral-phase and the requirements for sustaining peace. A joint review of the phase II plan, involving the new Government, the United Nations

system, political parties and civil society organizations in Liberia and international partners, will constitute an integral part of the transition process.

51. The formulation of phase II will coincide with the review and conclusion of the current statement of mutual commitments. Negotiations between the country team and national stakeholders for the development of the new United Nations Development Assistance Framework, which will go into effect in January 2019, will also commence at this time. It is therefore recommended that phase II of the peacebuilding plan form the cornerstone of the new Development Assistance Framework and provide direction for the renewal of other international cooperation frameworks and donor assistance agreements with the Government of Liberia. The opportunity also exists for the peacebuilding plan to become a framework for mutual accountability that defines the shared responsibilities of the Government of Liberia, national stakeholders and the international community for sustaining peace. In principle, phase II may cover the period until 2020, when the midterm review of the Agenda for Transformation II is to take place, thus establishing another critical review juncture for the mandate for sustaining peace of the Government, the United Nations system and international partners.

52. During phase II, the country team will strengthen its unified communication, coordination and convening role by establishing a visible and well-defined presence in the public media, ensuring that Liberians are fully aware of the role the United Nations will play in the ongoing efforts to sustain peace. Full implementation of the recommendations from the country team mapping exercise will be critical to addressing gaps in United Nations system capabilities to support the Government of Liberia following the departure of UNMIL. A major part of this effort will be providing support to the newly elected Government of Liberia in undertaking national planning processes, including advising on harmonization of national plans with the Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2063 and other international frameworks, including international human rights treaty obligations, while ensuring effective coordination with international partners. A whole-of-government approach should be adopted with respect to all such efforts, including the executive branch, the Legislature and the judiciary. In this overall planning context, the United Nations system, the Government of Liberia and partners will explore the option of an expanded recovery and peacebuilding assessment, or a hybrid alternative, which would involve the European Union, the United Nations, the World Bank, ECOWAS and the African Union.

53. Preventing conflict will be the main goal of United Nations peace and security activities following the withdrawal of UNMIL. A crucial element of the strategy will be support for the formulation and implementation of a national peace policy and relevant local peace consolidation mechanisms. The United Nations system will need to continue to monitor events in Liberia and make available, upon request, its good offices and technical assistance, including in negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and judicial settlement, in support of efforts to sustain peace, including, inter alia, through the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel. Work with regional and subregional organizations will support effective early warning and, guided by Security Council resolution 2171 (2014), ensure that early warning of potential conflicts translates into early, concrete preventive action. Within the framework of the Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections arrangement, the United Nations will provide assistance to priority peacebuilding

areas in the justice and security sectors through advisory and capacity-building support, as outlined in the Justice and Security Joint Programme 2016-2019, including supporting the implementation of the national security strategy.

54. The protection of human rights is critical for sustaining peace, and United Nations support to national institutions and national plans will be critical during this phase of the peacebuilding plan. If the decision is taken to establish an office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Liberia, the United Nations system should agree upon a very specific portfolio of tasks focused on building national capacity and setting out a well-defined exit strategy.

55. The country team will strengthen its collaboration with national stakeholders to support key governance-related peacebuilding areas. One of the most important of these will be the process of constitutional reform, which is required to strengthen national unity, promote human rights and gender equality, ensure participatory and accountable governance and consolidate stability through social and economic justice. This will include engagement with political parties, civil society and relevant government agencies, such as the Governance Commission, the National Elections Commission and the Land Authority, to ensure that peace is consolidated and that reconciliation is advanced beyond the elections. In this regard, civil society will be a critical partner of the United Nations system in strengthening participatory approaches to government decision-making, involving citizens' voices in processes of change and ensuring that all Liberians feel that their concerns are heard by central and local authorities. United Nations agencies, funds and programmes will work with competent government entities to ensure that organizations representing youth and women are fully engaged in strategic peacebuilding processes. This approach will be especially pertinent in advancing the constitutional reform process leading to a referendum and strengthening local government capacities to manage equitable and inclusive service delivery in all 15 counties.

56. During phase II of the peacebuilding plan, the United Nations system will work with national stakeholders to address persistent poverty. This will require long-term support for economic reform, which can furnish local communities with sustainable livelihoods and development opportunities, with particular attention to promoting women's economic empowerment and youth employment. United Nations organizations will support the Government of Liberia in developing and implementing strategies for sustainable, inclusive, private sector-led economic growth aimed at diversifying the economy and building up domestic sources of revenue. Such approaches can defuse the sociopolitical tensions underlying potential conflict. In addition, the United Nation system will support efforts to combat corruption, which continues to be a significant drain on government resources and an impediment to private sector investment.

57. The United Nations system will support the national census in 2018 and participate in the Census Partnership Committee. Since the census will form the basis for the distribution of national resources and political constituencies, the United Nations role will involve ensuring the maintenance of international standards and providing advice to the National Population Census Technical Committee.

58. Through its programmes, the country team will have the specific responsibility of helping the Government of Liberia to build human capabilities within society. It is critical that the United Nations system adopt the practices that will be the most

effective in improving the human development prospects for all Liberians, with particular focus on inclusive economic growth, high quality education, robust health-care systems, infrastructure development, entrepreneurship and community livelihoods for women and youth. At the same time, ongoing work to strengthen the voice and participation of women and youth in decision-making must be intensified. Given the intimate relationship between human activity and the country's ecosystem, the United Nations and its partners must support efforts to strengthen capacities for sustainable natural resource management and climate change adaptation.

VIII. Support for the peacebuilding plan from multilateral and bilateral actors

59. Multilateral and bilateral actors will support the implementation of the peacebuilding plan by aligning their efforts with Liberian priorities and supporting inclusive political processes based on open dialogue. During phase I of the plan this will involve continuing to advocate for critical reforms and provide support in line with pre-existing programmes and commitments. Core peacebuilding values, such as inclusive politics, dialogue and reconciliation, equal participation of women and men, boys and girls, youth and people living with disabilities, and environmental sustainability, will remain at the heart of cooperation agreements between the Government of Liberia and its international partners.

60. Multilateral and bilateral actors will review the efficiency and effectiveness of the financial instruments and arrangements aimed at sustaining peace, which may include leveraging pooled funding and blended financing among the United Nations, bilateral and international donors, multilateral financial institutions and the private sector in order to share risks and maximize the impact of peace and State-building efforts. International partners will ensure transparency, accountability and appropriate monitoring of funds to mitigate corruption, while promoting an inclusive, integrated, strategic and coherent approach to peacebuilding.

61. Multilateral and bilateral actors will generate and sustain international attention on Liberia and advocate with all parties and candidates for the peaceful conduct of elections in 2017 and adherence to the Electoral Law. The African Union has undertaken to provide some technical or logistical support to the election process and to deploy an observer mission. It will be crucial for international actors to engage with the preparations of the country team to sustain peacebuilding needs after the withdrawal of UNMIL, participate in the review of phase I of the peacebuilding plan with the newly elected Government of Liberia, national stakeholders and the United Nations system, and assist with the formulation of specific commitments for phase II of the plan. Multilateral and bilateral actors will participate fully in the Government's management arrangements for the peacebuilding plan and be a part of the process to monitor progress in delivering results.

62. It is anticipated that ECOWAS will be a key partner for peace and security in Liberia following the withdrawal of UNMIL. It is the premier subregional body in West Africa and has a statutory mandate to promote peace and security and a wide-ranging human security and human development agenda. Accordingly, ECOWAS

partnerships with the Government of Liberia, the country team and international actors will be significant. ECOWAS is a natural ally of the sustaining peace agenda and possesses a response capacity to deter and prevent violent conflict.

63. In collaboration with the Government of Liberia, the United Nations system and international partners, ECOWAS will support the peacebuilding plan through the following actions:

(a) Deploying the ECOWAS Warning and Response Network in Liberia through the setting up of the National Centre for the Coordination of the Response Mechanism in Monrovia during phase I of the plan;

(b) Establishing a short- and long-term elections observation mission to monitor the 2017 electoral process and deploying a fact-finding team to Liberia to help with policy and strategic advice to contribute to the conduct of an inclusive and peaceful election;

(c) Providing a capacity-building programme for women and media representatives during the election period;

(d) Engaging Liberian civil society organizations on the essential elements of the ECOWAS regional conflict prevention framework;

(e) Working with the Government of Liberia (the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Peacebuilding Office and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection) on domesticating international instruments on gender-based violence and the promotion of the education and empowerment of women and girls;

(f) Supporting the United Nations system in ensuring the sustainable transfer of UNMIL radio to an independent entity.

64. The World Bank Group will support the peacebuilding plan through the following actions:

(a) Supporting the Government of Liberia in attaining more efficient and effective use of resources, including through a public expenditure review of the security sector;

(b) Completing and sharing with the Government of Liberia and international partners a joint risk and resilience assessment by May 2017;

(c) Giving priority to conflict-sensitive and conflict-mitigating activities, such as labour-intensive public works, youth skills development and empowerment and community-driven development, in ongoing development programmes, as appropriate;

(d) Exploring the option of a tripartite (European Union, United Nations and World Bank) or expanded peacebuilding assessment (recovery and peacebuilding assessment or a hybrid alternative) as part of the planning process for phase II;

(e) Supporting the Government of Liberia in developing and implementing its public financial management strategy so as to consolidate the gains made in revenue mobilization, resource allocation, expenditure management and accountability;

(f) Fostering shared growth through a conducive business climate, improved connectivity, enhanced power supply and access to quality public services.

IX. Management arrangements

65. The peacebuilding plan will be monitored jointly by the Government of Liberia the United Nations system, the Peacebuilding Commission, bilateral and multilateral actors, regional organizations and representatives of Liberian civil society.

66. During phase I, the Agenda for Transformation sector working groups will meet once every two months to monitor implementation of the peacebuilding plan. The results of the deliberations of the sector working groups will be fed into meetings of the Liberia Development Alliance through the approved pillar structure. The Alliance, which is chaired by the President, will act as the higher-level policy oversight body for the implementation of the peacebuilding plan. The Alliance will meet twice a year to review the peacebuilding plan, and the Government of Liberia will provide the secretariat and preparatory support for those meetings. The purpose of the formal meetings will be to review progress in achieving the objectives and commitments of the peacebuilding plan and to focus the attention of the international community on key peacebuilding issues requiring additional action. Specific sectoral issues will be discussed by the sector working groups. On issues related to the transition of UNMIL, discussions should include specific engagement with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, as required to advance implementation.

67. Before the departure of UNMIL, the new Government of Liberia, the United Nations system, the Peacebuilding Commission, bilateral and multilateral actors, regional organizations and representatives of Liberian civil society will initiate the review of progress made during phase I of the plan. The review will lead to an agreement of priority activities and financing required for phase II and reaffirm the management arrangements for monitoring the plan's implementation. The process will encompass the final review of the statement of mutual commitments and will explore options for underwriting phase II of the peacebuilding plan with a framework for mutual accountability. During phase II of the plan, it is expected that regular progress meetings will continue to be held and include the Peacebuilding Commission.

68. The instrument for monitoring results will use indicators for measuring progress towards restoring social cohesion and advancing reconciliation, as two critical elements of conflict transformation and sustaining peace. It will be based on existing qualitative and quantitative methodologies used in Liberia for assessing risk and provide diagnostic and predictive qualities that will allow the Government and stakeholders to identify optimal entry points for peacebuilding policies and programmes. As a barometer of progress, the instrument will monitor critical peacebuilding benchmarks over the course of the implementation of the peacebuilding plan. Social cohesion will be measured by monitoring perceived corruption, trust in institutions, human security and life satisfaction. Progress in reconciliation will be assessed by monitoring indicators for negative stereotypes, intergroup anxiety, social distance, social threats and active discrimination.

Annex I

Peacebuilding priorities of the Government of Liberia in phase I

The Government of Liberia commits to work with all national and international stakeholders to deliver the following results before January 2018:

Promoting inclusive and peaceful elections in 2017

- Ensure free, fair, transparent and safe conduct of the 2017 presidential and legislative elections in accordance with the new Electoral Law
- Conclude a compact among political parties for inclusive peaceful elections, post-election processes and political transition
- Provide agreed budgetary appropriations and timely allotment for the 2017 electoral process in line with operational requirements
- Encourage political parties to increase women's participation in elected institutions based upon the new Electoral Law
- Ensure that the justice and security agencies are prepared and resourced with adequate and timely budgetary appropriations and improve agencies' community-level coordination

Peace, security and rule of law

- Provide timely budgetary appropriations to the Ministry of Justice and the judiciary, within the limit of the available resources, to deliver effective prosecutorial, public defence and adjudication services for election-related crimes and disputes
- Strengthen community engagement in the security sector through well-coordinated civil society partnerships and community policing mechanisms
- Reinforce the role of the county and related district security councils and the county-level early warning and early response network, and connect these mechanisms to the Liberia National Early Warning and Response Mechanism Coordinating Centre
- Operationalize the Policy and Civilian Complaints Review Boards and initiate implementation of the national security strategy, the Firearms and Ammunition Control Act, the Police Act and the Immigration Services Act
- Continue the implementation of nationally validated recommendations addressing systemic weaknesses in the criminal justice sector
- Revise the Strategic Road Map for National Healing, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation (2013-2030) and produce volume I of the project on national history symbols to foster national unity
- Undertake seven county reconciliation dialogues and convene a national conference on reconciliation

Governance and public institutions

- Manage the political and administrative transition and ensure the protection of public assets
- Pass the Local Government Bill by September 2017
- Pass the Land Rights Bill by September 2017 and ensure that the Land Authority is operational through budgetary appropriations
- Create the Ministry of Local Government and Peacebuilding by June 2017, which will replace the Ministry of Internal Affairs
- Complete the establishment of the county service centres in all 15 counties and provide appropriate resources in the 2017/18 fiscal budget for their operations and recurrent costs
- Implement the Government of Liberia-civil society organizations policy framework and accord, with particular focus on holding a national summit involving the Government and the National Civil Society Council of Liberia
- Develop and present to the Legislature a Witness Protection and Whistle Blower Bill by July 2017

Economic reform and development

- Formulate a national planning framework to succeed the Agenda for Transformation aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063
- Establish a research and policy unit in the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning to improve macroeconomic policy management functions, including economic modelling and policy advisory services to enhance fiscal prudence, revenue and services
- Strengthen the existing aid information management system to strengthen capacities for aid coordination and management

Cross-cutting issues

- Implement the National Human Rights Action Plan and promote protection of human rights across all spheres of government; request the establishment of an office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Liberia
- Pass the National Youth Bill by September 2017
- Accelerate the implementation of projects and programmes designed to constructively engage young people in the 2017 electoral process, including the youth opportunity project and the technical and vocational training programme
- Ensure the meaningful participation of women throughout all phases of the 2017 electoral process, as candidates, voters and election administrators

- Apply gender-responsive budgeting in the preparation of the 2017/18 budgets of ministries, agencies and commissions, paying particular attention to marginalized girls and women
- Expand the women's peace huts initiative to enhance inclusive community dialogue, mediation and conflict resolution
- Complete the review of the national action plan for implementing Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and initiate the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Note: In order to facilitate the Government's commitment to implementing actions under phase I of the peacebuilding plan, the Peacebuilding Office will work with the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning and other line ministries, agencies and commissions to detail the financial implications in preparation for the 2017/18 fiscal budget period.

Annex II

Peacebuilding priorities of the Government of Liberia in phase II

It is envisaged that the new Government of Liberia will work with national and international stakeholders to mobilize political and financial support to advance peacebuilding in the following areas:

Peace, security and rule of law

- Implement legislative and policy reforms relating to public safety and the private security sector
- Modernize the legislative and policy framework of the justice and security sector with targeted reforms and the effective implementation of new laws and policies
- Strengthen the coordination between the three branches of Government and between justice and security institutions, as well as with integrity institutions, with the objective of ensuring policy coherence at the operational level and improving oversight and accountability
- Undertake essential recruitment and training to further decentralize the presence of competent justice and security sector personnel across the country, with recruitment focusing on fulfilling established targets for women's employment in the sector
- Implement recommendations of the public expenditure review, with the objective of ensuring appropriate resourcing and effective financial management of the justice and security sector
- Draft and enact a national peace policy
- Provide adequate and timely budgetary support to ensure the effective operations of key conflict prevention and peacebuilding institutions
- Provide adequate and timely financial support to strengthen cross-border peace initiatives, including the Mano River Union cross-border strategy, involving local chiefs, traditional elders and communities on both sides of the borders between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone
- Strengthen the role of traditional mechanisms for peace and conflict prevention, including the Palava Hut system, in the peacebuilding process

Governance and public institutions

- Conclude the constitutional reform process and hold a referendum on the Liberian Constitution by the end of December 2019
- Accelerate the process of decentralization and ensure the full implementation of the Local Government Act
- Strengthen national integrity institutions and judicial mechanisms to combat the culture and practices of corruption and impunity

- Accelerate the process of land reform to ensure the implementation of an equitable and robust land governance and administration system
- Amend the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission Act of 2008, granting full prosecutorial power to anti-corruption courts

Economic reform and development

- Implement a comprehensive national development framework, ensuring that the requisite political and financial assets exist to domesticate the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063
- Review and implement a domestic resource mobilization strategy and expand the fiscal space, with an emphasis on diversifying the Liberian economy, fostering private sector growth and leveraging the investment potential of Liberians in the diaspora

Cross-cutting issues

- Accelerate the domestication of outstanding international human rights instruments into national law and take concrete protective measures to ensure the full enjoyment of rights by all
- Address transitional justice issues in Liberia in line with the recommendations in the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- Establish mechanisms for the implementation and independent monitoring of recommendations contained in universal periodic review reports
- Ensure that the Independent National Commission on Human Rights is able to fully implement its mandate across the country
- Develop and implement a coordinated and well-funded national youth employment programme that is able to provide decent work to all categories of young people, including university graduates and apprenticeship trainees
- Introduce civic education and citizenship studies in the curriculum at the primary and secondary school levels and support extracurricular, in-the-community efforts to employ dialogue as a means of solving problems
- Create a nationwide network of sociopsychological counselling services that target vulnerable youth and help them with their moral, ethical, intellectual and mental health development
- Enshrine gender affirmative action as a part of the process for constitutional reform
- Ensure that all national policy and planning processes are gender responsive
- Ensure effective and transparent conflict- and climate-sensitive management of natural resources
- Integrate indigenous and effective coping strategies into national development policy and planning, ensuring that social and conflict perspectives are part of climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies and interventions

Annex III

Statement of registered political parties in Liberia in support of the peacebuilding plan for Liberia, adopted at the headquarters of the United Nations Mission in Liberia in Monrovia on 17 March 2017

Whereas political parties in Liberia participated in the consultations initiated by the United Nations system in Liberia to develop a peacebuilding plan pursuant to Security Council resolution 2333 (2016),

Whereas the parties embraced the guiding principle of inclusive national ownership of the peacebuilding plan,

Whereas the parties accepted that the priorities outlined in the peacebuilding plan are critical for sustaining peace in Liberia, and that peace consolidation remains a national responsibility of all branches of government and the broader society,

Now, thereof, the political parties resolve to support the peacebuilding plan for Liberia and to work with the Government of Liberia, the United Nations system, regional organizations, bilateral and multilateral partners and civil society to actively pursue the national peacebuilding priorities outlined in annexes I and II of the peacebuilding plan.

Annex IV

Statement of the National Civil Society Council of Liberia, 18 March 2017

Whereas the National Civil Society Council of Liberia is the apex body of civil society in Liberia which is elected by a cross section of peers from civil society organizations throughout the country,

Whereas the National Civil Society Council of Liberia looks forward to fully participating at all levels in the implementation of the peacebuilding plan,

Whereas civil society organizations need to monitor the election process, serve as civic voter educators and hold political parties accountable for the implementation of the memorandum of understanding between political parties and the National Elections Commission, and pursue advocacy activities to this end in support of our democracy,

Whereas civil society organizations are instrumental to consolidating peace, by providing expertise and experience for the whole process of national reconciliation to avoid returning to our violent past,

Whereas civil society organizations need to be involved in the process of enacting key legislation of the Government required for addressing the root causes of conflict, including the pending legislation on land rights, local governance, anti-corruption, gender equity and domestic violence,

Whereas community-based organizations should be fully involved in decentralization efforts and be partners in setting up and operating the county service centres,

Whereas, civil society will be part of the mechanism to monitor the implementation of the peacebuilding plan, as reflected in the management arrangements,

Now, thereof, the National Civil Society Council of Liberia and its members resolve to support the peacebuilding plan and will continue to work assiduously towards consolidating peace, and reaffirm their commitment to hold the Government of Liberia accountable in the process of transition and the implementation of the peacebuilding plan.